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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [IN](#) [NP](#) [NO](#)
SUBJECT: NORWAY'S ROLE IN NEPAL

REF: KATHMANDU 814

Classified By: Pol/Econ Counselor Mike Hammer, reason 1.4 (b) and (d)

1.(C) Summary. Norway continues to play a visible role in Nepal by advocating discussions between the Nepali governing monarchy and rival political factions. Although not wishing to pursue the course of an interventionist third party, Norway brings Nepali parties together through information-sharing opportunities (such as the March 2006 Kathmandu Conference and Roundtable Talks). Norway also places high value on maintaining strong bilateral ties with India, which will ultimately determine the extent of its Nepal involvement. End summary.

Keen to Advance Open Dialogue

2.(C) On April 4 we met with Tore Hattrem, Deputy Director General of the Peace and Reconciliation Section at the MFA. While outlining Norway's existing (and future) involvement in Nepal, he emphasized that Norway would not become "interventionist," similar to its mediation role in Sri Lanka and the Philippines. He envisioned Norway continuing to gather together the governing monarchy and rival political parties of Nepal, while encouraging open dialogue. This approach would resemble Norway's recent role as host of the March 5-6 Conference in Kathmandu and the March 27 Kathmandu Roundtable (reftel).

3.(C) Hattrem, who chaired a break-out session on conflict resolution during the March 27 Roundtable, felt the recent meeting was successful. He restated the Norwegian goal was to "leave our experiences with the audience" so that they could be "ignited" from their own internal discussions. Hattrem believed that the Roundtable participants (which mostly included political group members and not governmental representatives) reached consensus on a variety of issues. First, the Nepali participants favored (and believed possible) a monitored cease-fire with the Marxists. Additionally, participants concluded that a new interim government (elected by the "popular will") was needed. Finally, a constitutional change was favored (e.g. resulting in a form of national assembly).

What About Forming a "Like-Minded" Group?

4.(C) Ultimately, Hattrem sees Norway organizing a group consisting of several countries with a "like-minded" approach to Nepal. These countries, likely including Switzerland and Finland, would direct the Nepalis involved in the political process to "shape-up" and "take responsibility." He characterized the U.S. and Norwegian foreign policies concerning Nepal as similar, except that he sees the U.S. as encouraging Nepal's rival political parties to align themselves with the ruling monarchy (and against the Maoist

insurgents). He also pointed out that although Norway is not dealing with the Maoists (noting the illegal status of these insurgents), he envisioned a point when the insurgents would eventually need to join any peace talks.

India Must Be On Board

5.(C) Hattrem spoke at length about Norway's intent to keep India informed of the Norwegian efforts in Nepal (including various meetings in Oslo with the Indian Ambassador). He noted India's certain objection to a direct mediation role of any third-party country. Citing the importance of Indian-Norwegian bilateral relations, Hattrem revealed that Norway would "yield" its involvement in Nepal should India object.

Comment

6.(C) Norway's intensified efforts in Nepal reflect the new left-of-center government's more activist foreign policy and keen interest in highlighting Norway's role as an international mediator. As Norway moves forward with these and other mediation efforts, we have asked that they consult closely with us and therefore, we are pleased that they briefed us fully both in Kathmandu and here. With this in mind, if we are comfortable with a Norwegian role in Nepal, we should engage them because they do have mediation expertise and can bring important monetary resources to the table.

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